

VZCZCXRO6716
PP RUEHQU
DE RUEHPU #2476 3631456
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 291456Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4978
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1359
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1190
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC PRIORITY 0674
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1089

UNCLAS PORT AU PRINCE 002476

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [HA](#) [KDEM](#)

SUBJECT: STUDENTS CONTINUE TO PROTEST INSECURITY

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 2371

¶1. (U) Summary: December 26 and 28 were marked by student protests in Port-au-Prince. In accordance with what has become the central issue across all sectors in Haiti in recent weeks, demonstrators took to the streets and organized a sit-in protesting violence and kidnappings and demanding that the GoH do its job in combating insecurity. Both protests were for the most part peaceful, although one canister of tear gas was released on the protesters on December 26. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The December 26 protest included members of several university groups, including GRAFNEH (Grand Front National des Etudiants Haitiens), CONUH (Conference Nationale des Universitaires Haitiens) and FEUH (Federation of Haitian University Students), among others (see reftel for profiles of these groups). A GRAFNEH spokesperson told Poloff they were protesting against insecurity and kidnapping in hopes of forcing the GoH and MINUSTAH to fight the gangs who are terrorizing the Haitian populace. News reports estimated the crowd at 40 to 50 people, whereas a spokesperson for GRAFNEH told Poloff they had 200 to 250 protesters. The protest began in front of the school of ethnology near the National Palace and worked its way to the prime minister's office, where the protesters shouted insults including slurs against the PM, whom some have nicknamed the "Prime Minister of Kidnappers". While the protesters were gathered outside the gates of the Prime Minister's office, HNP crowd-control (CIMO) detonated tear gas, although the detonation may have been accidental according to news reports and GRAFNEH. GRAFNEH is planning more demonstrations for January.

¶3. (U) Another protest planned for December 28 outside of the State University's school of social sciences morphed into a sit-in at the last minute due to the announcement of a pro-Lavalas demonstration that same day. Herve Saintilus announced the student protest more than a week early and then announced on the radio they were changing to a sit-in for fear of attacks from Lavalas partisans. (Note: Saintilus was part of the protests that eventually toppled the Aristide government and was given a job with the ministry of education by the IGoH. End Note.) Saintilus also stated more protests would be forthcoming.

¶4. (U) Comment: Recent protests are bringing together not just students but groups from all sectors of society under a

unified message -- no more kidnapping. Representatives from government, civil society, and now students are thinking along the same lines in what has become the central issue in Haiti in recent weeks. Protests are continuing while HNP and MINUSTAH carry out operations against gangs in the Port-au-Prince slums, and the population does not appear to be convinced yet that the GoH is doing all it can to end the kidnapping problem.

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